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Reply to Office Action of July 30, 2003

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This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method for operating a slot machine including a plurality of symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) maintaining a list of award-yielding symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols in a controller;
- (b) randomly generating on a plurality of paylines a first set of the symbols from the plurality of symbols;
- (c) providing an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set on any of the paylines before any said symbol can be replaced;
- (d) selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol in the first set with one of the plurality of symbols to generate a second set of the symbols, the second set of symbols displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and
- (e) providing an award for each award-yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of the paylines even if said award yielding symbol combination in the second set appeared in the first set.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set for individual replacement includes selecting at least one predetermined symbol for individual replacement.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of individually replacing the symbols includes an animation of the symbols which are replaced.

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Claim 4 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of individually replacing the symbols includes individually replacing the selected symbols without spinning the reels.

Claims 5 and 6 (cancelled)

Claim 7 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein generating the first set of symbols and second set of symbols is part of a bonus game.

Claim 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one selected symbol in the first set, and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol of the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least two selected symbols in the first set, and wherein each said wild symbol sequentially functions as at least one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 11 (cancelled)

Claim 12 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol includes individually replacing one of the other symbols on a plurality of reels, wherein said symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The method of Claim 12, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for a plurality of

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symbols on one of said reels, wherein each said wild symbols function as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 14 (cancelled)

Claim 15 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the step of replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other of the symbols in a row of symbols along a plurality of reels of the slot machine, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the plurality of symbols.

Claim 16 (cancelled)

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of award yielding symbol combinations of said plurality of symbols;
- (b) generating a first set of said symbols, wherein one of said symbols in said first set is a first wild symbol;
- (c) providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set including any award yielding symbol combinations that include the first wild symbol, the first wild symbol functioning as one of the other symbols to maximize the award yielding combinations;
- (d) selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in the first set except for the first wild symbol in the set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with a second wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and
- (e) providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set including any award yielding symbol combinations that include the first and second wild symbols created with the first wild symbol and any award yielding symbol combinations created with the first and second wild symbols, wherein the

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~~second wild symbol replaces another symbol and~~ each of the first and second wild symbols function as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations.

Claim 18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one selected symbol on the reel which includes said generated wild symbol.

Claim 20 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol of one row of symbols on the reels, wherein said row includes said generated wild symbol.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one symbol on one of the reels and at least one symbol on one of the rows of symbols on the reels, wherein said reel and said row include said generated wild symbol.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the gaming device is a slot machine including a plurality of reels having said symbols thereon, and the step of individually replacing each selected symbol in the first set includes substituting a wild symbol for at least one other predetermined generated symbol.

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Claim 23 (currently amended): A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of playing cards, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) maintaining in a controller of said gaming device a list of award yielding playing card combinations;
- (b) generating a first set of playing cards, wherein one of said playing cards in said set is a wild card;
- (c) providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination appearing in said first set including said generated wildcard which functions as one of the cards to maximize the award yielding combinations in said first set;
- (d) selecting at least one but not all of the cards in the first set except for said wildcard for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected playing card with another wildcard to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set; and
- (e) providing an award for each award yielding playing card combination in said second set including the wildcards even if the award yielding card combinations appeared in the first set.

Claim 24 (cancelled)

Claim 25 (previously presented): The method of Claim 1, wherein the steps (a) to (e) are provided to a player through a data network.

Claim 26 (previously presented): The method of Claim 25, wherein the data network is an internet.

Claim 27 (previously presented): The method of Claim 17, wherein the steps (a) to (e) are provided to a player through a data network.

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Claim 28 (previously presented): The method of Claim 27, wherein the data network is an internet.

Claim 29 (previously presented): The method of Claim 23, wherein the steps (a) to (e) are provided to a player through a data network.

Claim 30 (previously presented): The method of Claim 29, wherein the data network is an internet.

Claim 31 (previously presented): A method for determining an award in a slot machine including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) randomly generating on a plurality of paylines a first set of said symbols;
- (b) providing a player an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set on any of said paylines;
- (c) selecting at least one but not all of the symbols in said first set for individual replacement and individually replacing each said selected symbol with one of the symbols to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and
- (d) providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set on any of said paylines including all award yielding symbol combinations in the second set even if an award was provided for such award yielding combinations in the first set.

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Claim 32 (currently amended): A method for operating a gaming device including a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding combinations of said symbols, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) generating a first set of said symbols, wherein one of said symbols in said set is a first wild symbol;
- (b) providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said wild symbol functions as one of the symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said first set;
- (c) individually substituting a second wild symbol for at least one but not all of the symbols in said first set except for said first wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and
- (d) providing an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, including each award yielding combination including said first wild symbol ~~symbol~~ symbol only and including both first and second wild symbols and wherein each wild symbol functions as one of said symbols to maximize the award yielding symbol combinations in said second set.

Claim 33 (cancelled)

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Claim 34 (previously presented): A slot machine comprising:

- a plurality of reels and a plurality of paylines with the reels;
- a plurality of symbols on said reels, said symbols including a wild symbol;
- a plurality of symbol combinations that each yield an award if generated by said reels; and

- a processor which controls said reels, wherein said processor: (i) causes the reels to generate a first set of said symbols along the paylines; (ii) provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in said first set on any of the paylines, said wild symbol functioning as at least one other non-wild symbol; (iii) substitutes another one of the non-wild symbols in said first set with another wild symbol to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and (iv) provides an award for each award yielding symbol combination in said second set on any of the paylines, regardless of whether the combination includes a wild symbol, wherein each wild symbol functions as at least one other non-wild symbol.

Claim 35 (currently amended): A gaming device comprising:

- a processor;

- a memory device which maintains a plurality of symbols and a plurality of award yielding symbol combinations, wherein the processor communicates with the memory device to:

- generate a first set of symbols, wherein one of said symbols is a first wild symbol;
 - provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said first set, wherein said first wild symbol functions as one of the symbols;

- individually substitute a second wild symbol for at least one but not all other non-wild symbols in said first set to create a second set of symbols that is displayed in place of the first set of symbols; and

- provide an award for each award yielding symbol combination appearing in said second set, the combinations including the first wild symbol only and including both the first and second wild symbols, wherein each wild symbol including the first and second wild symbols function as one of the symbols.

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Claim 36 (cancelled)

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